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IAC-D-57/9
23 August 1955
TS #102252

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INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Post-Mortem on NIE 11-5-55: Air Defense of the
Sino-Soviet Bloc, 1955-1960

1. On 23 August, the IAC noted the attached findings and approved the action set forth in paragraph 5.
2. The IAC agencies are therefore requested to take appropriate steps to comply.

Paul A. Borel
PAUL A. BOREL
Secretary

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TS #102252POST MORTEM ON NIE 11-5-55: AIR DEFENSE OF THE
SINO-SOVIET BLOC, 1955-1960

1. NIE 11-5-55, approved by the IAC on 12 July 1955, was approximately six months in preparation. To provide a logical and systematic approach to a complex and bulky NIE of this type, it was produced in four separate steps using ad hoc interagency committees in three preliminary stages. The three committees prepared successively: (a) an estimate of Bloc air defense requirements; (b) an estimate of present and future air defense equipment, forces, and capabilities of the Bloc as determined by available intelligence; and (c) an estimate of the cost of the program estimated in Step Two, as well as of the economic capabilities of the Bloc to provide such an air defense system. Finally, agency representatives coordinated in the usual way a draft prepared by O/NE on the basis of contributions produced by the three committees. This method was a further refinement of that used initially in preparing NIE 11-6-54 on guided missiles.

I. FINDINGS

2. Certain difficulties were encountered in the committee method of preparing this estimate. It proved impractical and in some respects would probably have been undesirable to obtain complete interagency concurrence for the committee contributions. However, a large degree of concurrence was obtained informally at the committee level, which assisted greatly in the subsequent review of the estimate by the IAC Representatives. There was some lack of consistency in the interpretation of requirements by the various committees, leading to different positions being taken by the same agency in these committees. This made the reconciliation of differing views time-consuming in the final stages of the estimate.

3. Nevertheless, the step-by-step committee approach facilitated the preparation of the estimate and is a technique which should continue to be used where appropriate. However, this process requires that each agency's representatives on the various committees should be completely familiar with the process of producing national estimates and fully coordinate their approaches to the problem.

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4. The many intelligence deficiencies encountered in this estimate are not likely to be fully overcome short of major changes in Bloc security practices or some unexpected breakthrough by intelligence. Deficiencies continue to exist in weapons research, development, and production, deployment of equipment and forces, technical capabilities of weapons, training programs and combat readiness, and economic costs and capabilities in particular fields. Deficiencies in the field of electronics are among the most serious. There was a divergence of opinion as to the probable performance of Bloc radar under operational conditions. Our intelligence should take into account the probable variance between optimum performance and performance in combat. In addition our data on the rate of production and on the probable costs of electronics equipment is weak. An effort to produce more comprehensive special studies on the technical capabilities of Bloc air defense equipment might help to fill the present gaps in intelligence.

II. ACTION

5. That the agencies with primary responsibility in the electronics fields undertake a more intensive and comprehensive research effort to overcome intelligence deficiencies with respect to: (a) probable operational capabilities of Soviet radar, and (b) probable costs of Soviet radar and other electronics. The SEC and EIC are to review these research efforts and submit a report on progress made to the IAC prior to 1 July 1956.

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